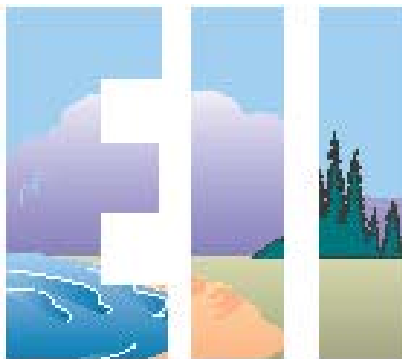




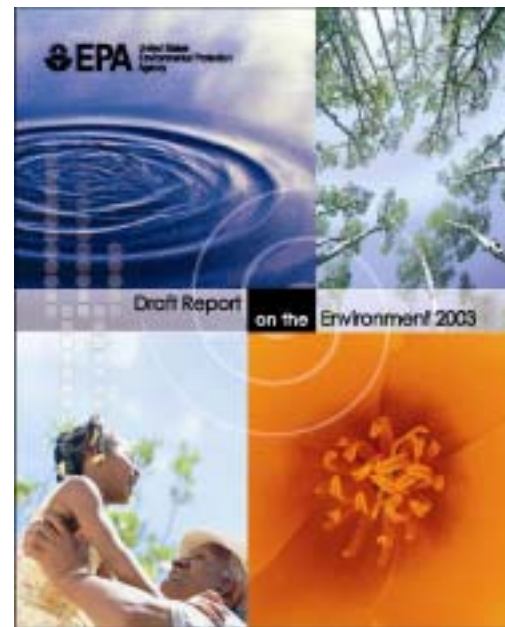
# EPA's Draft Report on the Environment 2003 and the Environmental Indicators Initiative

U.S. EPA Regional/State/Tribal  
ORD Science Topic Workshop  
on Environmental Indicators



*Making the Linkages Through the Use of  
Environmental Indicators*

May 18, 2004



# Topics



- Draft Report on the Environment
- Feedback on DROE
- Principles for moving forward
- Next generation products
- Timing



# Draft ROE: Only the beginning. . .



## Purposes of the effort:

- Identify indicators--measures of environmental results--to describe status and trends in the environment and human health
- Describe what EPA knows--and doesn't know--about the current state of the environment at the national level and how it is changing



# About the ROE components

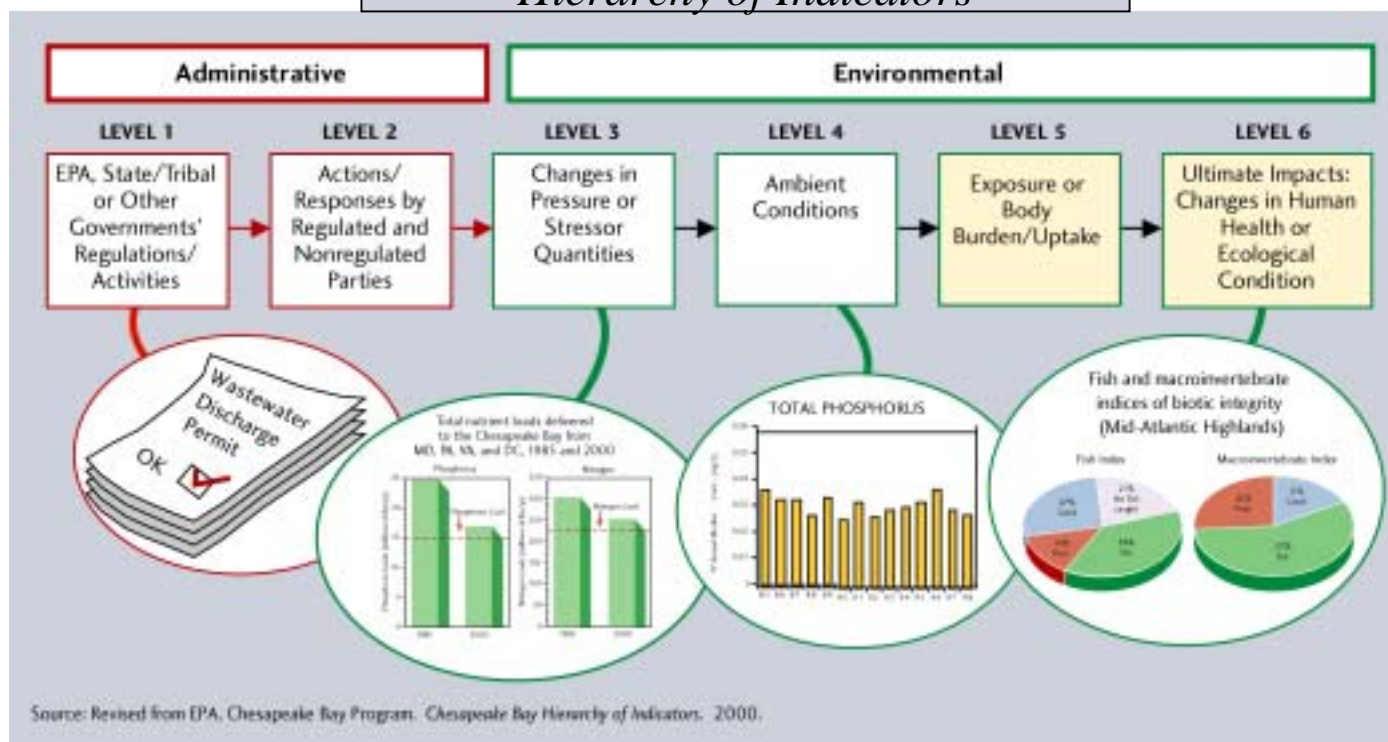


- A shorter **public report** written for environmental decision makers in the public and private sectors as well as members of the general public who have a strong interest in environmental issues and EPA
- A longer **technical document** written for environmental professionals
- Chapters on **Air**, **Water**, **Land** focusing more on indicators related to EPA's programs and **Human Health** and **Ecological Condition** chapters using indicators with broad application

# Underlying the report. . .



## *Hierarchy of Indicators*





# Presenting the indicators



- Questions were posed to be answered using information and indicators
- National level information used whenever possible
- Used best available scientific information and indicators
  - peer reviewed
  - supported by sound collection methods, data management systems, and quality assurance procedures
- Indicators supported by comparable national-level data collected for more than one time period were designated **"Category 1"**. Indicators supported by comparable data at sub-national levels or that were one-time collections were designated **"Category 2"** indicators



# Partners for indicator data



- Other federal agencies
  - Review coordinated by CEQ
- States - working through the Environmental Council of the States
- Tribes
- Nongovernmental organizations such as The Heinz Center and NatureServe



# Overall findings. . .



- The Nation has made progress in protecting our environment and human health
- But many environmental challenges and information gaps remain





# Selected findings



- **Air:** Emissions of six principal pollutants have decreased 25% in 30 years.
- **Water:** Rates of annual wetland losses have decreased from 500,000 acres/year 30 years ago to less than 100,000 acres/year today.
- **Land:** Industrial releases of toxic chemicals as reported to TRI have declined in recent years.
- **Human Health:** Health of the American public is generally good and improving.
- **Ecological Condition:** Significant gaps in the availability of indicators and data make it impossible to report on status and trends nationally.

# Gaps



- Report also described key data and information gaps in each of the chapters
  - Air
  - Water
  - Land
  - Human Health
  - Ecological Condition



# Feedback & Principles for Moving Forward

# Overview of National Dialogue



## LOGISTICS

- 6 meetings; October 2003 - February 2004
- 30-50 participants/session
- State, federal, local, and tribal governments; non-profit organizations; academia; and industry represented

## KEY TOPICS

- Report organization
- Frequency and in what medium (e.g., hard copy, web)
- Appropriateness of questions posed? Gaps – Issues, questions, indicators
- How well are the questions answered by the indicators?
- Proposals for other indicators
- Appropriateness of national scale
- Use of report
- Aligning environmental indicators with strategic planning

# National Dialogue Themes



- Strong support for EPA developing the ROE, and for future reports, indicator activities;
- Suggestions to commit to regular reporting;
- Confusion on purpose, audience, and scope;
- Concern about spin and credibility; and
- Suggestions to also address local, state, regional, global scales.
- Significant interest in how Agency plans to use report

# National Dialogue Themes



## Content Specific Feedback

- Many ideas for additional topics/emphasis:
  - Philadelphia: Land use
  - Chicago: Indicators at multiple geographic scales
  - Atlanta: Ecological Framework/Health Indicators
  - Seattle: Oceans/marine
  - Dallas: Energy
  - San Francisco: Wetlands and climate change
- Address environmental justice, population, economics, demographics
- Climate change
- Invasive species
- Groundwater – quantity and quality
- Resource use – e.g. water/energy consumption

# SAB Feedback



- Applauded EPA for the content, utility and quality of the ROE; stressed value to the Nation – it should be an evolving, ongoing effort.
- ROE should remain question-driven, but the organization of chapters and questions should be improved.
- Clear-cut, systematic criteria for linking environmental exposure to disease and ecological condition should be utilized and transparently described.
- Should be more regional and even local indicators - national averages are not appropriate for some indicators.
- Public Report should be an interpretation of the data in the Technical Document for a public audience - not a distillation of the TD.

# Principles for Moving Forward



## Key Principles

- Sharpen focus of ROE function – purpose, audience, and intended use.
- Develop, in addition to the ROE, an indicator product line for different audiences and to meet different needs.
- Evolution, not revolution of products.
- Synchronize development of ROE with other Agency processes - timing of release demonstrates commitment to Strategic Planning.
- Pursue indicator presentation at other appropriate geographic scales.



# Next Generation Products



The ROE is an “umbrella” term that includes several products and is one component of the Environmental Indicators Initiative (EII)

- Technical Document
- General public report
- Electronic Report on the Environment (e-ROE)
  - Near-term: enhanced presentation; access to metadata
  - Longer-term: enable analysis, mapping

# Timing



## Development of ROE Technical Document and Public Report

- Technical document will serve as the scientific basis for the development of Public Report and e-ROE
- Indicator Peer Review - Aug 2004
- Release of Technical Document, Public Report, e-ROE planned for March 2006